1915
F95

FULLER

Mary Wilkins Freeman

English

A. B.

1915

UNIV OF
ILLINOIS
LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY
1915
F95

MARY WILKINS FREEMAN

BY

ELIZABETH FULLER

THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

IN

ENGLISH

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1915

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/marywilkinsfreem00full

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

May 29 1903

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Elizabeth Fuller

ENTITLED Mary Wilkins Freeman

IS APPROVED BY ME AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF Bachelor of Arts

Stuart P. Sherman
Instructor in Charge

APPROVED: Stuart P. Sherman

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OF English

1915
F95

CONTENTS

		Page
I	Introduction	1
II	Influences Determining the Character of Her Work	5
III	Her Early Works	16
IV	Her Novels	23
V	Her Short Stories	40

Appendix

	Biography and General Criticism	54
	Separate Reviews	
	Novels	56
	Short Stories	58
	List of Works	
	Books	59
	Short Stories Published Separately	60
	Outline Suggesting Course of Development	63

318172

UIUC

M A R Y W I L K I N S F R E E M A N

I

INTRODUCTION

Just as clear understanding of a man's motives is essential if we are to judge his course of action fairly, so acquaintance with an author's underlying purpose and his aim is indispensable to a satisfactory reading and a just criticism of his books. Were we to make a study of the incentives which lie behind the novels and short stories of today we would probably find that the desire to make money brought a great number of them into existence. Some were written to win for their authors undying glory. Others were planned to impart knowledge, to act as a moral spur or guide, to help solve the social questions of the day, to serve as the medium for presenting introspective studies of the soul and its workings. These various purposes often blend in countless proportions and combinations, and there is no single aim or group of aims which we can unreservedly condemn. But we can and must have a clear comprehension of them and give them due consideration if we are to judge effectively and justly the work of any author.

In the case of Mary Wilkins Freeman, more than in that of most writers, the underlying purpose must be discovered in the works, for she has always led a life that hedged her away from the peering public. She is adept at escaping interviewers, and she is not an author who takes pleasure in telling volubly

how and why and when and where she wrote her latest piece of work. But though this writer is so elusive and so non-communicative it is impossible to read her stories without perceiving clearly the purpose which has led during these thirty-one years to the completion of her fifteen novels and two hundred short stories.

That the money motive was an incentive, a very minor one, is possible. That the wish for fame was present seems disproved by her constant efforts to escape its results. The desire to impart information seems in her case entirely lacking; though many have ascribed it to her, the didactic purpose seems also to be lacking,as further study of her works will show. If a forming of new or altering of old convictions follows the reading of her work, it is an attendant and subordinate result rather than the aim which shaped the story. Her power of psychological analysis of character is undeniable. It is largely this power which gives her short stories their overwhelming, almost overpowering illusion of reality, yet never is this psychological factor an end in itself. Mary Wilkins Freeman never dissects a human soul merely for the sake of displaying to her public what is inside and how it works; her character analysis is ever a means to an end.

It seems a law of nature that when a person possessed of what we, to cover our lack of knowledge, call the artist temperament, eagerly studies some one phase of nature - whether it be the clouds of the sunset or the power and grace of the perfect human body, or the mighty majesty of the mountains - this gift of clear vision which is his alone brings upon him a passionate

and overmastering desire to reproduce the thing he sees, sharing thereby with others the elusive beauties, the aura of subtle suggestion and aspiration which have been revealed to him. And the result is not a replica of one sunset, one old man's face, one glimpse of spring's wild flowers, one oak tree bending before the storm; it is a composite of all he has ever seen, instinct with the spirit, the hidden meaning of all. Few can do this, though the desire to do it lies dormant in many.

Mary Wilkins Freeman, herself a New Englander, knew the small group of New Englanders in the little farms and towns of Massachusetts and Vermont as few others have ever known them. She had pierced their almost impassable defensive wall of reserve and had grown familiar, as though with an old and long-loved book, with the tragedies, the comedies, the granite-like strength of character, the emotion all the deeper for its repression. And just as the artist wants others to see not only the wreckage of a storm swept forest but the grandeur as well, so she wanted them to see the power together with the weakness, the achievement with the failure, the greatness with the petty oddities, the right to admiration and reverence as well as pity or censure, which went to make up this New Englander.

Mary Wilkins Freeman did not undertake this task in the spirit of a partizan or a champion. Her attitude is wholly detached; her personal feelings are kept far in the background; her spirit is that of the artist who wishes only to portray for others what he has himself seen. She has accomplished this with remarkable success. Of an isolated, heretofore almost unknown branch of New England life she has given us a vivid,

sympathetic, powerful picture which worthily stands in the front ranks of our own literature and need not be ashamed of comparison with that of other nations. She has worked with such broad themes, has so avoided petty or limiting details, that her short stories will probably be of as vital interest to the reader two hundred years hence as they are to us.

So a thorough study of Mary Wilkins Freeman's work goes far to convince us that through these thirty-one years her aim has been not to gain wealth or fame, to teach or to preach, but rather the pure artist desire to use her power in creating a picture of the people she knew and understood best as perfect and as permanent as lay within the scope of that power. This aim is not unique among American writers but it is admittedly rare, and there are few who have come nearer to realizing it than Mrs. Freeman.

II

INFLUENCES DETERMINING THE CHARACTER OF HER WORK

Beyond possibility of denial that isolated group of New Englanders of whom Mary Wilkins Freeman writes is the outcome of a most significant chain of circumstances in the development of New England. Mrs. Freeman is of pure English ancestry. Her father was a descendant of Bray Wilkins of Salem, who was a judge during the inquisition of the witches. The fathers and grandfathers of these Massachusetts colonists were men of the sturdiest moral fiber, the most rugged character, to be found in England. They were almost supersensitive to questions of right and wrong. This quality was probably an inevitable result of their long battle for their religion; its result was, however, that in Massachusetts they exchanged political tyranny for tyranny of conscience. Their lives were fanatically ascetic. All play of fancy or exercise of the imagination was barred as of the Evil One. Especially was all display of emotion condemned; even their worship was bare and forbidding though the spirit behind it was fervent. In short, the natural human feelings were crushed down beneath the iron edict of repression. The Puritans did their best to annihilate the inherent hunger of humanity for humanity; in place of the play of natural human emotions they tried to substitute a cold and lofty spiritual ideal. Another result of these conditions was the growth of a mighty will. With the colonists, however, this force found its outlet in the great issues, the momentous forces against which

they had to strive.

Later these issues were settled. The new government started on its way to prosperity and power. All need for this conflict and struggle ceased. Life became stable and humdrum. Many of these people went west to build new communities, meet new conditions, form new ideals. Gradually they broke off completely from the New Englanders in the East. The New Englander who remained was the one in whom the old ideals of Plymouth and Salem were strongest. The soul of the colonist in him was as alive as ever, but all else had changed. His environment was colorless; the issues before him were small and petty compared with those his fathers faced. From lack of adequate outlet, therefore, his mighty, relentless will often became distorted and almost diseased. From his fathers he had inherited the character which they had developed through contact with great questions and vital conflicts, but the questions and conflicts themselves were passed away. This character, however, was a living, active force which demanded some sort of expression and so we find case after case of abnormal manifestations like that of Barney Thayer in Mrs. Freeman's "Pembroke." Since these people had no large matters on which this power of will could react, it inevitably grew morbid, perverted, or distorted into unnatural developments. Tracing the course of such developments held a peculiar fascination for one of Mary Wilkins Freeman's temperament. She was the first person to perceive and set forth the dramatic value of unreasonable stubbornness.[1] In one of her collections of short stories seventeen are based on happiness

---

[1] Charles Miner Thompson: Atlantic Monthly. May,1899. pp. 665-75.

postponed or misery caused by an unbending will abnormally developed. This element, really her own discovery in the field of American fiction, is the source of much of the psychological interest and the distinction of her works. She has dealt with it in practically all of her stories; in her novels it has always been set forth as a basic trait of two or more characters. It is this theme of a mighty will, distorted through lack of a proper outlet, that makes many of her towns seem, as one critic has said of Pembroke, "a town of battling lunatics." Possibly this idea has so infatuated her that it has swayed her sense of proportion; but it is surely a significant fact that Vermont, with a smaller population than Boston, has two large insane asylums, most of whose inmates come from just such farms and villages as those portrayed in Mary Wilkins Freeman's stories. Yet the occasions for the conflicts and tyrannical domination of will in her works are seldom petty or sordid ones. Usually the cause is a point of personal dignity, freedom,or an ethical question. Had the setting been loftier, the matter more vital, the resulting drama would probably have the qualities of noble tragedy and compelling grandeur. The actors would, like their fathers, have been heroes and martyrs. Even with conditions as they are, however, these abnormal and perverted wills prove indisputably the solid strength and depth of the New England character.

Mary Wilkins Freeman's stories picture also another inevitable development of the Puritan character. The stern ban placed on all expression of imagination or emotion gradually attained its natural result. The power of expressing emotion was lost.

The play of spontaneous human feelings was paralyzed; the springs of expression and action no longer ran freely. People suffered with a depth and anguish which gained even more poignancy from its dumb, helpless inability to express itself or give way through any natural human outlet. From this stern and tragic repression grew a smoldering intensity of nature often hidden completely by the deceptively calm and reserved demeanor.

In representing this trait of character, Mary Wilkins Freeman forms the last of a logical progression of three authors. Cotton Mather represents the first stage in the development of this peculiar repression of emotion, that of the earliest New England pioneers who placed the ban on all imagination and who limited all emotion to a bare and ascetic religious worship. Hawthorne portrays the race several generations later; his "Ethan Brand" is symbolic of the condition he pictures. After long wandering in search of the unpardonable sin Ethan Brand at last finds it in his own heart,- the crime of sacrificing all natural, human emotions to the cold striving after an abstract spiritual ideal. He had broken that mysterious, responsive link with humanity; the tenets of an empty creed had disappeared and all that he had left was the loneliness of a dead idealism. Mary Wilkins Freeman shows the last stage: that of impotent inability to appropriate again that lost share in the life of humanity; to express freely and normally the emotions that fought within for outlet. In this fashion these three writers show forth the whole tragic progress from the lofty spirituality of the Puritans, which scorned the common, simple

food of human joys and sorrows, to the final stage where it was gradually but inevitably starved into helplessness. Through the religious enthusiasm of Cotton Mather, the tragic symbolism of Hawthorne, the hopeless paralysis of expression pictured by Mary Wilkins Freeman, we trace one and the same theme.

That Mrs. Freeman's direct descent from a typical Puritan leader gave her a peculiarly keen, penetrating, and sympathetic insight into a nature of puzzling contradictions, an intricate complexity of elements and of baffling depths cannot be doubted. Madame Blanc, in the Revue des Deau Mondes, says: "In her one may study a soul as curious as the Russian or Scandinavian-English soul of the seventeenth century transplanted to a region that has become the ancient portion of America."

A thorough understanding of Mrs. Freeman's works makes indispensable a knowledge of her early life, home, and surroundings. She was born in Randolph, Massachusetts, a quiet country town, in 1862. Her father was an architect and builder. The stock on both sides of the house was pure English. She attended the elementary schools of Randolph and then went to Brattleboro, Vermont, where part of the formative period was passed. Later she was a student of Mt. Holyoke Seminary. Her schooling was not extensive, and she may with some truth be classed as a self-trained writer. The greater share of her literary material comes from reading and observation. The observation, too, has been restricted to a comparatively limited field. Mary Wilkins Freeman is not one of those "local color" enthusiasts who spend the summer in some obscure Devonshire village to get the dialect and quaint customs, who pass the winter in Egypt in search of

inspiration, who search the East for its mystic charm, travel the hidden by-ways beneath the gloss of half civilized countries in quest of startling adventure, live in frontier mining towns and lumber camps to see life in the raw, and haunt the outskirts of war zones in feverish thirst to behold at first hand the big, elemental tragedies of life. The field of Mrs. Freeman's observation is confined to the states of Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Jersey.

After her school life, Mary Wilkins lived in the quiet home of old girlhood friends until her marriage in 1902 to Dr. Charles Freeman. Since then her home has been in Metuchen, New Jersey. Efforts of journalists, "lion" hunters, and feature story writers to investigate her quiet life have been in the main fruitless. We read that she found great enjoyment in the simple country life, though she made frequent short trips to Boston to supply the elements lacking in drowsy Randolph. We hear that she is very catholic in her tastes; she was much interested in the country folk of Randolph, and yet Westerners had for her a strange attraction. She is not a student of languages, but is a wide reader of English literature. Her tastes range from Dickens and Thackeray to Miss Jewett and Mrs. Catherwood. Scott is a favorite author; among the Russians, Tolstoi and Dostoievsky appeal to her strongly.

Of the two towns in which her childhood was spent, Brattleboro probably had the more potent influence upon her. Much of the descriptive part of her work points to memories of Randolph and her knowledge of the life in shoe-factory towns also comes from there, but evidence drawn from her books themselves seems

to show conclusively that material for plots, incidents, and character drawing was largely obtained during the Brattleboro period. Brattleboro had not at that time fully grown out of the isolated, humdrum, valley-town stage into the industrial, railroad, factory stage; many remnants of the old village life remained. In her childhood there was a large group of older people who represented an earlier day before the town had become so modern and who knew intimately and personally the life of that former time. Brattleboro was a rich and nearly inexhaustible mine of local legend and anecdote. But the dictates of propriety and custom limited the sources available to Mary Wilkins. Had she been a man she could have worked free and unrestricted, and approached the desired material in countless different ways. As a girl, however, the only source sanctioned by convention was the tales of the old and middle-aged women of the town. These, naturally, dealt almost entirely with family quarrels and dissensions. The direct influence of this fact on the subject matter of Mrs. Freeman's work is fairly startling. The most casual reader is struck by the constant presence of domestic troubles as a theme; in fact, her novels with only a few exceptions deal with cases of family unhappiness while of the twenty-eight stories in "A Humble Romance" over three-fourths tell of family and neighborhood quarrels.

Though the narrowing of her field was in one sense a drawback, yet as one of her most admirable critics says, "Our task is not to censure a writer for not going outside the circle of her genius, but to measure its radius."[1] It is true that Mrs.

---

[1] Charles Miner Thompson: Atlantic Monthly. May, 1899. pp.665-75.

Freeman's work weakens in quality as soon as she goes beyond the New England village life she knows so well. Her imagination is of the type which requires first-hand observation to furnish it with working material. The fact that her opportunities for this observation have been comparatively limited of course restricts the range of variation possible in her stories. But on the other hand this narrowing of her outlook had the effect of so focusing her attention on the few types and phases of life within that field of vision that she studied them intensively and knew them thoroughly. Her complete familiarity with this New England village life, her absolute mastery of detail, give her work a terseness, vividness, and force that will make it endure.

Her temperament has also placed clearly defined bounds on the range of her work. She evidently was a serious and imaginative child who thought long and deeply over the moral issues and questions of conduct contained in the stories she heard. She responded instinctively to sad or tragic tales, and she felt the pathos even in humorous incidents related to her. The bareness and hardness of the lives around her would appeal strongly to one of so sensitive a disposition; later in life her sense of the tragic or pathetic always won over her sense of humor, keen though it was, in the contest for such a situation as that in "The Revolt of Mother." The meditative and introspective trend of mind inherited from her Puritan ancestors caused her to turn with quickened interest to questions of metaphysics, problems of the will, cases of morbid conscientiousness, and tragedies of a perverted will. Sarah Orne Jewett, on the

other hand, draws away from the tragic, the repulsive, the harsh and finds far greater attraction in the pleasant everyday round of domestic life viewed from its brighter side and with its concealed depths of sorrow and tragedy untouched. As a result, we have these two authors, though both dealing with New England village life, producing stories as widely different as "The Queen's Twin" and "The Twelfth Guest." The people are the same; they could almost come from the same family, but the divergence in viewpoint separates the stories like a gulf.

Mrs. Freeman's choice of subject matter seems, then, almost inevitable. Her heredity, her girlhood environment, her quiet residence in Massachusetts and Vermont with no trips into the outer world, and her own temperamental inclination all combined to lead her into the field which she chose and in which she made herself preeminent. And though its bounds restricted her, this same narrowness of range resulted, as close study shows, in a completeness of mastery which she could not have obtained save through the intensive work which these very limitations imposed.

It thus becomes clear from a study of Mrs. Freeman's ancestry and her environment while in early, impressionistic childhood and youth that she had the basis for a thorough and complete understanding as well as an intuitive sympathy with that one isolated branch of our New England pioneers to be found in the villages and farms of Massachusetts and Vermont. These people appealed to her both from the side of human interest and of artistic possibilities. Since they were of her own kin, it was natural that the traits in them which baffled others should

find an instinctive and responsive comprehension in her. She saw that many of their characteristics made them types of the whole American nation; she saw that their strength of will, misdirected and perverted though it was, spoke of a strength and depth of character potent for good or evil; she saw under their calm and forced reserve a tumult of emotions crying for expression, that bewildering mixture of fire and ice that combines in the Puritan character. On the other hand, one of Mrs. Freeman's dramatic imagination could hardly fail to have a vivid appreciation of the impressive scenes and tense situations which a skillful use of that overmastering dominance of will could evolve. No less clearly would she see the hopeless pathos of that stern repression and the sheer impotency of expressing those feelings which might be gripping them with a breathless intensity of pain or joy.

When we consider the sturdy pride and strong sense of kinship inherent in the New England nature, it seems not improbable that Mrs. Freeman's determination to draw an adequate and a true picture of the people she knew gained vigor from her acquaintance with some of the other countless stories dealing with New England life. Many were crude in construction, but even the well written ones gave almost without exception a distorted picture of the New Englander. Some made of the type a caricature; many used it as material for would-be humorous stories; almost none treated their subject matter in an effective, dignified and worthy fashion or gave a worthy and dignified picture of a people who certainly deserved other at the hands of the American people than to be made a subject for mirth. Whether it was

a conscious aim of Mrs. Freeman or not, her stories have sunk these others into deserved oblivion. She has won for her little group of New Englanders the understanding, respect, and friendship of the rest of the United States. She has accomplished this, too, without slurring over in the least their own peculiar eccentricities and faults. And in her accomplishment of this she has fulfilled her ultimate aim of portraying these people in stories whose vividness, force, mastery of style, and universal human appeal have made them classics which are not only national but world literature.

III

HER EARLY WORKS

The story of Mrs. Freeman's career as a writer has not been one either of erratic, "temperamental" development or of a startling and meteoric blaze of genius; it has been the record of a steady, normal growth into full possession and control of her powers. She began by writing poems and stories for children. Her first published book was a child's story, "The Adventures of Ann," which appeared in 1886. The poems and shorter stories came out one at a time in several magazines but later were gathered into a book of verse, "Once upon a Time," and one of fairy tales, "The Pot of Gold."

A critical study of the poetry would seem to show rather conclusively that Mrs. Freeman is not a writer for children. We feel that she is not at ease in that position; she strains down to her audience. If we compare her with a very modern writer for children, we must admit that she lacks the easy, free camaraderie, the whimsical fancy, the touches of drollery that make children seize eagerly on Carolyn Well's verses as their own especial property to which grown-ups have no right. It is impossible to avoid contrasting Mrs. Freeman's book with the verses of that master of all child poetry, Robert Louis Stevenson. He has to a marvellous degree that perfect instinctive comradeship with his child readers which results in absolute ease. To see the contrast more clearly set his classic verse "The Rain" over against her poem on the same subject, "Crow Warnings."

The Rain

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrella's here,
And on the ships at sea.

Crow Warnings

No, it won't rain tomorrow! well what if the crows
  From that withered old cornfield fly,
A-cawing for rain - let them caw if they like,
  With all of that blue in the sky!
Caw away, you old birds, in your rusty black cloaks;
  I know that you're not speaking true!
There are not enough clouds in the world in the night
  To cover up all of that blue!

Though alike in subject and in type, one nevertheless fails to make more than a fleeting impression on a child, while the other will probably last as long as there are children who speak English. Mrs. Freeman bases her appeal to the child's attention on a perception of beauty. We have the "withered cornfield," the "rusty black cloaks," "that blue in the sky." To grown-ups each phrase suggests a sudden, clear cut picture. But the child's store of connotative images is not large enough for this; the phrases bring only a kind of blank, puzzled look into his eyes. Nor is he interested in the optimistic idea that the blue sky offsets the threats of the crows. In spite of this, if there were a definite picture or an appeal to his fancy, the verse could hold him. But, lacking imaginative appeal, story, or definite picture, it relies wholly on charm of phrase and the rather abstract idea of the contest between the caws for rain and the flecks of blue sky. It is a picture seen by a grown-up.

In "The Rain" we have no special charm of phrase; there is

not one adjective. But you have each thought as it flashes through the mind of the child at the window: first the "every where-ness" of the rain, the objects seen from the window, the rain falling on the raised umbrellas and dripping off - a detail which would not be missed by the child - and finally the sudden veer of his fancy off to the ships on the distant sea and the idea that the same rain is raining on them too. This last thought would certainly lead the child's fancy off on a long train of imaginings and aptly ends the verse. There is nothing which is not concrete and there is nothing which is seen from the grown-up's point of view; therefore the ideas find an instant response in the child's mind,and the verse is unhesitatingly appropriated by him.

Yet the very characteristics that keep her work from being successful as poetry for children make it interesting reading for grown-ups. "Wee Willie Winkie" has an abundance of descriptive matter whose lovely phrases and elusively charming touches are lost on the child. He wants something visible, concrete, easily visualized, and yet this same sensitiveness to the loveliness of nature and this unique power of transcribing the charm into phrases of rare beauty is what gives the verse its undeniable attraction for older people. "The Fairy Flag," one of the longer narrative poems, would fail utterly to hold most children, yet it is one of her best in the book and its haunting suggestion of symbolic meaning gives it added appeal. The obligato in "Down in Clover" has an idyllic freedom and lilt. Though the author's conceits are sometimes forced, her rhythm is sometimes weak, her rhymes are often questionable, and her verse

form lacks variation, these poems nevertheless exercise an irresistible charm over grown-ups, yet a charm that fails completely in its appeal to children.

So sweeping a statement cannot be made of her stories for children in "The Pot of Gold." Their destined audience read them eagerly, held by the never failing lure of "Once upon a time." Yet though the story interests them while they read, it does not hold them long afterward. To compare Mrs. Freeman's stories with those of Anderson would hardly be generous, yet the reason his tales remain the child's intimate friends for years is that when the author wrote them he was completely oblivious to everybody except his audience of children. With the "Pot of Gold," on the contrary, we have the disturbing sense that Mrs. Freeman's gaze often went beyond the circle of children and was fixed on the mature reader. The children could not possibly catch the flashes of "grown-up" humor, the subtle tinge of irony, the clverly concealed satire of "grown-up" weaknesses that light up almost every page. The keen yet kindly insight, unexpected touches of the ludicrous and the grotesque, together with a certain ease of diction are characteristics which to grown-ups make the fairy tales pleasant reading but which in the case of child readers are beyond their grasp. The children will probably read them more than once, but it will be for the same reason that they read "Gulliver's Travels" again and again - just for the story.

It was not long, however, before Mrs. Freeman began to write stories planned for mature readers; in 1884 were published "A Gatherer of Simples," "A Humble Soul," and "A Humble Romance."

It is an interesting fact that the last of these and "A New England Nun," which came not long after, are the two stories which oftener than any others are cited as representative of Mrs. Freeman's best in the short story, for it is rarely that an author strikes the note of his best work so early in his career. Even though Mrs. Freeman made much progress afterward along many lines, all of those qualities which give her work its own unique individuality and peculiar merit are present in these early stories. In them she made a notable departure from tradition by placing middle-aged women in the position of heroine. One effect of writing child stories is evident in her directness, clearness, and simplicity. In her telling of the story she gives the impression of being completely exterior to and detached from it; her own personality is kept entirely in the background. This same characteristic, as Charles Miner Thompson aptly points out, is one of the most striking points of Maupassant's style and probably is the cause of that sense of inevitableness, of a steady and irresistible march of events to some inescapable end, which is found in the stories of both. We find an instance of this in the "Revolt of Mother" when Mother first reveals her decision.

"Nanny laid down her work. 'I thought father wanted them to put the hay in the new barn,' she said wonderingly.

'It's all right,' replied her mother.

Sammy slid down from the load of hay and came in to see if dinner was ready.

'I ain't goin' to get a regular dinner today as long as father's gone,' said his mother. 'I've let the fire go out. You can have some bread an' milk an' pie. I thought we could get along.' She set out some bowls of milk, some bread, and a pie on the kitchen table. 'You'd better eat your dinner now,' said she. ' I want you to help me afterward.'

Nanny and Sammy stared at each other. There was something strange in their mother's manner. Mrs. Penn did not eat anything

herself. She went into the pantry and they heard her moving dishes while they ate. Presently she came out with a pile of plates. She got the clothes basket out of the shed and packed them in it. Nanny and Sammy watched. She brought out cups and saucers and put them in with the plates.

'What you goin' to do, mother?' inquired Nanny in a timid voice. A sense of something unusual made her tremble, as if it were a ghost. Sammy rolled his eyes over his pie.

'You'll see what I'm goin' to do,' replied Mrs. Penn. 'If you're through, Nanny, I want you to go upstairs and pack your things; an' I want you, Sammy, to help me take down the bed in the bedroom.'

'Oh, mother, what for?' gasped Nanny.

'You'll see.'

During the next few hours a feat was performed by this simple, pious New England mother which was equal in its way to Wolfe's storming of the Heights of Abraham."

The writer's central idea is always driven home with resistless force; her compression is most unusual; the story is absolutely bare of superfluous detail. The strength of a single impression is aided largely by the short, terse, powerful sentences and the plain, homely words. The author's rich knowledge of details and her suggestive use of them gives peculiar vividness. Her style is entirely without decoration; there is no attempt at ease or pleasing grace; it possesses a stinging force of its own. She depends not on adornment for the carrying power of the story, but on the humor or pathos in the persons and the situations portrayed. Her technique is admirable; the single effect which she wishes to gain pervades the whole story, while her situations lead with a peculiar impression of the inevitable up to a strong and decisive climax. Her characters are drawn with a few telling strokes; they reveal themselves largely in conversation and action. Her unerring insight and intimate acquaintance with the type pictured makes this possible, and the fact that her psychology is never at fault lends the convincingness of reality to her people. The following paragraphs from

"A New England Nun" are a fair illustration of her terse, graphic introduction of characters.

"Louisa Ellis had been peacefully sewing at her sitting room window all afternoon. Now she quilted her needle carefully into her work, which she folded precisely and laid in a basket with her thimble and thread and scissors. Louisa could not remember that ever in her life she had mislaid one of these little feminine appurtenances, which had become, from long use and constant association a very part of her personality.

"Louisa tied a green apron around her waist, and got a flat straw hat with a green ribbon. Then she went into the garden with a little blue crockery bowl to pick some currants for her tea. After the currants were picked she sat on the back door step and stemmed them, collecting the stems carefully in her apron, and afterwards throwing them in the hencoop. She looked sharply at the grass beside the step to see if any had fallen there.

"Louisa was slow and still in her movements; it took her a long while to prepare her tea; but when it was ready it was set forth with as much grace as though she had been a veritable guest to her own self....."

In 1890 was published a short story which marked the author as master of the form she had chosen, "The Revolt of Mother." The perfection of the introduction, the clear cut sequence of episodes rising in intensity till the climax is reached, the reality and contrast of characters, the pathos deepened by just a suggestion of tragedy and lightened by flitting touches of humor inherent in the situation itself,- these marked the ending of Mrs. Freeman's apprenticeship as a short story writer.

IV

HER NOVELS

It seems almost inevitable that the goal of every short story writer, good, bad, or indifferent, shall be the novel. This law of sequence has given us some of our greatest novelists but it has also been the cause of more than one short story writer's ship-wreck upon the rocks of novel technique. This fate, however, did not seem to threaten Mrs. Freeman when her first novel was published for it was a book of much promise. Although one flaw revealed a weakness in the author's workmanship yet nothing seemed more probable than that time and experience would overcome it. This weakness lay in plot structure. A novel calls for a closely unified plot to which every incident in the book contributes an essential part and which consists of episodes following each other with inevitable sequence and increasing in power until they lead, at the climax, to the highest point of intensity and crisis. The succeeding denouement must fuse into one all the various threads of the narrative and bring the action decisively to a close. "Jane Field" is an expanded short story. Even though it has episodes that are tense with emotion and with the sense of vital issues at stake yet they are not welded into a plot. The question suggested by "Jane Field" was whether or not its author had gained such perfect mastery over the short story that she could not change to any other form of writing. And yet the beauty of the descriptions, the vivid reality of the people, the throb of repressed emotion, the unerring psychology of character analysis

and motivation, these contained so much of real worth that Mrs. Freeman's ultimate release from the fetters which limited her to the short story form and her final fulfillment of the demands of the novel seemed certain.

But in the following year it appeared that Mrs. Freeman had lost interest in her determination to compass novel structure, for her next piece of work was a play. When the reader takes up this play and the long magazine story, "Silence", also published in 1893 he cannot escape a suspicion that the author had been indulging in an orgy of lurid witchcraft legends, ghastly records of trials and executions, blood-curdling tales of Indian massacres, with perhaps a passing dip into the study of insanity as a minor diversion. "Silence", a story of massacre and insanity, will be discussed later. "Giles Corey, Yeoman", is a drama dealing with the subject of witchcraft. It is not an acting play; no audience could sit through a presentation of it if it were well given for the reading alone is almost unbearable. Yet "Giles Corey" shows a rather surprising acquaintance with the requirements of the play-wright's technique. The action is compact, rapid, and unified throughout. The dialogue performs the two functions of furthering the action and deepening the mysteriously uncanny atmosphere of the play. Though Nancy Fox is so overdrawn as to lose reality and the witch scene between her and Phoebe is almost oppressively eerie, the characters of Giles, Martha, and Olive are clear-cut and forceful. Anne and Mercy are hardly convincing in their jealousy and sin. The bigoted magistrates are painted in dark and relentless colors. But the continued horror, the terrible irony of the price Giles

pays for his momentary irritation at his wife's sane common sense, the oppressive gloom of the prison scene, the almost unendurable awfulness of Giles' death, these are the things that make the play revolting. Shakespeare tempers even "Macbeth" and "Hamlet" with brief scenes of humor and touches of laughter, but in all of "Giles Corey" there is nothing except unrelieved foreboding and deepening gloom ending in horrors. No human being is so constituted that he can stand such continued emphasis on the supernatural and terrible, so "Giles Corey" was not a popular success.

After this experiment in drama Mrs. Freeman returned to her former ambition and went to work on another novel. "Pembroke" was published in 1894. Though the book seemed a distinct success and the writer was hailed by some reviewers as the coming representative American novelist, yet the penetrating gaze of a few keener critics[1] discovered in "Pembroke" the same weakness that marred "Jane Field". It lacked the close-knit unifying of episode, the logical sequence of development, the gradual increase of intensity, and the clear-cut, inevitable climax that would have made of it a real novel. The several short stories which compose "Pembroke" are blended but not welded into one; they make a most interesting and suggestive composite picture of the community life but they do not make a plot; their various threads of narrative involving the different groups are so evenly pursued that we are in doubt as to which is the dominant one. There is not that steady deepening of interest and climactic rise in power shown , for instance, in the "Scarlet Letter"; on the contrary some of the tensest scenes come at the beginning, while

---

1 Edinburgh Review. April, 1898. pp. 392-396.

while much of the remainder proceeds on a lower level.

In spite of these undeniable defects of technique one critic, when in his comparison of "Pembroke" and Mrs. Ward's "Marcella"[1] he says: "'Marcella' is a tour de force held up for the time being by a humane temper, but 'Pembroke' is a genuine artistic achievement in spite of the crumbling materials out of which it is built," voices a conviction which few readers of the novel can escape. The novel deals with its author's favorite theme, the suffering occasioned by the terrible power of abnormally developed wills; in close connection is shown that suffering which, intensified by an iron repression, grows almost to a mania. In some cases the author has joined a character of tender sensitiveness to one of granite hardness. Nearly every person pictured is either the possessor or the victim of one of these perverted and powerful wills, so that Pembroke does in truth seem often a "town of battling lunatics."[2] There seems also some justification for the remark of another critic[3], though in a different connection, that "a part of Miss Wilkins' genius lies in stopping just short of insanity in her characters; a little more and they would all be in the mad-house." Almost every character has some mental or moral abnormality. Eccentricity is indeed stressed to the point of losing effectiveness, as with "that terrible she-Puritan, Deborah Thayer", and the book is throughout a saddening and depressing. One the other hand it has remarkable power and shows forth convincingly the will, conscience, sense of duty, and grit that are the foundation of the American type. It has some strikingly unique descriptive phrases, such as "the peace of

---

1 H.E.Scudder. Atlantic Monthly, August 1894. pp. 272-274.
2 Charles Miner Thompson. Atlantic Monthly, May 1899. pp. 865-
3 Atlantic Monthly August, 1896 pp. 269-270.

defeat." Of the only servant in Pembroke the author says: "People treated her with respect and her very isolation of inequality gave her a reversed dignity." Of a cold, hard woman visited by her neighbors on an errand of curiosity: "Deborah, sitting in one of her best flag-bottomed chairs, seemed to be alone in the room." Of a chronic worrier: "Sarah Bernard, during all absences of her family, dug busily at imaginary pitfalls for them; had they all existed, the town would have been honey-combed." Nor does the sense of the abnormal darken the book completely; there are warm gleams of sunshine and flashes of brightness that relieve the tragedy and gloom. The poignant beauty of certain descriptive passages, such as the cherry party, do much to lighten the oppressiveness. The following passage is another example.

"The wind began to rise, and at the same time the full moon, impelled softly upward by force as unseen as thought. Charlotte's fair head gleamed out abruptly in the moon-light like a pale flower, but the folds of her purple skirt were as vaguely dark as the foliage on the lilac bush behinh her. All at once the flowering branches on a wide-spreading apple tree cut the gloom like the great silvery wings of a brooding bird. The grass in the yard was like a shaggy silvery fleece. Charlotte paid no more attention to it all than to her own breath or to a clock-tick which she would have had to withdraw from herself to hear."

The style, though loose and rather harsh in places, has an impressive quality of its own; the psychology and analysis is almost perfect: the characters cannot soon be forgotten. In these respects the author has achieved a success, yet judged from the stand point of novel-structure she has again failed.

And now comes a rather inexplicable incident in Mrs. Freeman's career as author. A certain syndicate, in its notoriety campaign, offered three prizes for the detective story that was the most ingenious mechanical puzzle and the best "thriller". Mary Wilkins Freeman, in collaboration with an unknown man, won

first prize with a story entitled "The Long Arm". All three prize stories were bad enough but theirs was the worst of the lot and the detective story-reading public raised such a commotion that the syndicate had to publish a lengthy article explaining and vindicating its choice as best it could. Mrs. Freeman's readers and personal friends were naturally somewhat annoyed at this blatant advertising, in fact at the whole episode, but they generously reflected that even the most quiet, conservative, and retirement-loving of us are sometimes impelled to strange outbreaks and grotesque adventures, so they overlooked her sensational debut as a writer of mystery story thrillers. But Mrs. Freeman herself, with characteristic earnestness, apparently took this episode as a revelation of her real mission in literature and was fully persuaded that in this direction alone her genius lay. The result was one of the anomalies in American literature. Nowhere can you find a more amazing contrast than that between Mrs. Freeman's first two novels and the one published the year after her detective story experience.

"Madelon" is a wildly impossible melodrama. It has little of the feeling for beauty, none of the sense of humor and grasp of character that were winning Mrs. Freeman a deserved place among American authors. It is crudely constructed; though the first chapter opens with a scene of deceptive beauty- moonlight, snow-sparkle, and faint music in the distance- before the end of the third the heroine has stabbed her lover after the most approved "thriller" methods of Owen Davis. The action plays out before the book is half through and the last part is a string of incidents that attempt by their very impossibility and quality of startling surprise to supply the needed vitality and interest.

Many episodes are unconvincing; some, such as the release of Burr, are impossible. All trace of the author's former skill in character drawing has vanished; she frenziedly tries to subordinate all else to Madelon, a most weird, contradictory, and unreal creation. Most of the writer's attention seems absorbed in directing the eccentric workings of her too-obvious machinery. In this blood-curdling tale all sense of style even is gone. The construction is rough; reserve is thrown to the winds; there is absurd phrasing; inelegance and bad taste are much in evidence; we find even lapses in grammar. Such illustrations as these are enough to show the contrast with "Jane Field."

"The jailer looked stupidly; then all his great system of bone and muscle seemed to back out of the room."

"The girl pointed her blue satin toes around the ballroom."

"The little worked apron the girl wore flung over her face."

"The bass viol fell to the ground like a woman."

The stilted inversions, loose and awkward constructions,and bad grammar make perfectly justifiable the concluding remark of one critic in discussing the book that English literature must be written in good English.

It is rather odd that in this same year was published rather a long magazine story entitled "Evalina's Garden," which in its atmosphere like a breath from an old rose garden, its pure and delicate character sketching, its light play of fancy, its tender and wistful romance, and its alluring charm of diction was equal to the best its author had yet done, even in short story.

It would seem that Mrs. Freeman had learned the lesson so

harshly taught by "Madelon," for in her next novel she returns to her quiet New England villagers. "Jerome," both in its weaknesses and excellencies, resembles "Pembroke." One would judge from the theme that Mrs. Freeman was at this time much interested in social and economic questions. She had without doubt thought deeply over the subjects of poverty and the distribution of wealth, and yet her powers are inadequate to the task of presenting such matter graphically in novel form. "Jerome" is again a series of loosely connected short stories, many of them obviously improbable. The theme which she attempts to handle is weakened by a forced happy ending. All through the lengthy book the story is weighed down by much superfluous description and minute analysis of emotional states. In such a smothering mass of detail the pointed, significant suggestiveness of Mrs. Freeman's former manner is lost. Not only is this detail carelessly chosen, but it is often couched in phrases of amazing awkwardness. When we read of a "stiff wobble of black bombazined hips;" "disrespect of discomfort;" numberless repetitions of such banal remarks as "What's to be done?" "Who's that?" "Where are you, husband?" -- we are driven to the conclusion that such inexcusably slipshod work and such lack of good taste in diction is the result of work hurried for publication.

And yet, in marked contrast to these flaws, are those phases of her work in which the author always shows such finished artistry. Jerome, a fine study both of character development and the influence of race traits, is admirably drawn. The minor characters are like bold, clear etchings. The village scenes are picturesque and vivid. We find some splendid dramatic

situations. Those pointed, compact, incisive observations which were scattered through "Pembroke" are here in greater number, and the same quality of shrewd insight gives such dialogues as the following a keen, satisfying tang. Jerome's mother is speaking to him of the rumor that in spite of their poverty he has given away all the wealth so unexpectedly inherited.

> " 'I want to know if it's true,' she said.
> 'Yes, mother, it is.'
> 'You've given it all away?'
> 'Yes, mother.'
> 'Your own folks won't get none of it?'
> Jerome shook his head . . . . . .
> Ann Edwards looked at her son with a face of pale recrimination and awe. She opened her mouth to speak, then closed it without a word. 'I never had a black silk dress in my life,' said she finally, in a shaking voice, and that was all the reproach which she offered."

The author's psychology in "Jerome" is again unerring, and in many places her old power of description struggles up through the mass of clogging detail, creating scenes of striking charm and almost flawless beauty. In short, "Jerome" emphasizes equally its writer's strength and weakness.

We wonder whether after the publication of "Jerome" Mrs. Freeman had been accused of "high brow" tendencies and of writing above the ordinary reader's grasp. Whatever may have been the cause, she now took heroic measures to bring her style down to the common level and she succeeded with a vengeance which left her readers aghast.

"The Jamesons" has no claim whatever to be called a novel. The chapters have almost no connection except that they concern Mrs. Jameson; the book is in fact not even a collection of short stories, but an elongated character sketch of that lady. The faint shadow of a love story is utterly without color or

individuality and does nothing to unify the book. Few, however, would dispute the right of "The Jamesons" to be called broad farce. Mrs. Jameson herself is a caricature no less artificial and absurd than her hen's woolen socks and settings of hard-boiled eggs. We look in vain for a single natural or appealing touch. Before, Mrs. Freeman had drawn her characters with pure, clear, delicate skill; Mrs. Jameson reminds one of a bill-board advertisement. Before, the author mingled her pathos and humor with subtle skill; here they unite in grotesque absurdities. Before, the oddities and weaknesses of the people had been absolutely true to human nature and had made a universal appeal, but Mrs. Jameson with her hammered exaggeration and total lack of shading is of the Josiah Allen or Widow Bedott class. We cannot help speculating as to the cause of this erratic divergence into farce, this desire of the cameo worker to do florid chromo portraits. We can hardly believe that it was a question of larger pay checks, or even the desire for wide and indiscriminate popularity. It seems rather the mistaken attempt of an author whose ambition to master every type of writing led her to try that sort of broad comedy which some writers can do well but which was to one of her particular kind of talent utterly alien and impossible.

Mrs. Freeman must have experienced,as the reaction following "The Jamesons," the same revulsion against vaudeville farce and its grotesque comic characters which the story brought to her readers and have sought relief in a book as far removed from that sort of thing as her imagination could compass. In 1900 came "The Heart's Highway." The very title shows that in

writing this book Mrs. Freeman had burnt many of her bridges behind her. We have evidence that "The Heart's Highway" achieved a far larger circle of girls' college and boarding-school readers than any previous novel. Nor is the alluring title misleading. The book deals with life in that world of romance -- the southern colonies before the Revolution. There is the color and sparkle and thrill of silks and brocades, of hot-blooded Southern chivalry, of intrigue and breathless peril, of an impassioned love affair. Even this latter has Mrs. Freeman accomplished, and she has done it with a degree of success that readers of "Pembroke" and "Jerome" would have sceptically declared impossible. It is not perfect by any means, but it is the sympathetic record of a charming and ideal affection. The heroine is lovely, willful, adorable, a type the author never attempted before. All the characters are vigorous, but delicately drawn. Another thing worthy of note is the ease with which the writer uses an artificial style, although there are still split infinitives and occasional ambiguities to be found. Her imagination seems to work more easily and spontaneously in this new field; there is more of fancy, more of incident, less of psychology. The history is subordinate; the tale is not meant to be a historical novel but a "study of character in pastel shades." The pictures are full of vivid color; the single figures are not so dominant as in preceding books but blend into the rest of the scene; the action is one brilliant procession of events. Although "The Heart's Highway" is by no means so significant or important a work as "Pembroke" or "Jerome," it is an attractive tale of a new kind, told in a new manner, and told with skill and charm. But it is not a novel.

But the glamor of southern love and laughter had by no means diverted Mrs. Freeman's mind from the social and economic problems of the day. When we consider the industrial life of New England we realize clearly how predominant an element in her study of economic matters was the New England shoe factory. The factory in Randolph gave her a chance to know intimately the lives of the "shoe-hands," and the results of this acquaintance she embodied in "The Portion of Labor." It does not, like "Jerome," attempt to solve the age-old question which makes up its theme; it is not an economic or socialistic tract; the artistic side of her subject matter is not at all subordinated to a scientific discussion of labor and capital.

The book is as weak in construction as "Jerome;" it has no more plot than a diary. While it marks a distinct advance of the author's powers in some directions, it reveals,in so far as her powers of constructing and handling a plot are concerned, a backward movement instead. More than half the book is given over to Ellen's girlhood; her baby whims are portrayed as minutely as is Lloyd's murder. The number of pages devoted to Ellen's runaway when a child is greatly out of proportion when compared with that telling of the strike at Lloyd's which directly leads up to the crisis of the book.

"The Portion of Labor" is a work of detailed soul analysis; its cross sections of life are examined and set forth with the thoroughness and skill of a scientist. The finest thing in the book is the picture its author gives of the soul of the New England shoe factory hand. "It is great and terrible. He

has a quality of sober and reasonable hope in his melancholy. His discontent comes from a wider vision." [1] Her very minuteness of analysis would grow intolerable were it not for the perfection with which it is done. Many of her minor characters, however, have more intrinsic interest than her visionary, isolated heroine who is so consumed with the zeal of her convictions but at last fulfills the requirements of the traditional heroine. Cynthia Lennox, the stubborn old grandmother, the Irish foreman,--these we remember as real people. Lloyd's wife, though so briefly sketched, is as vivid and tragic a figure as any in the book. The factory itself seems a living character whose personality pervades the whole story. A factor which makes for excessive depression and sordidness is the constant emphasis on misery and wretchedness resulting from lack of money. Even though the continual stress on debts, petty evasions, mean details of extreme poverty is effective, it is hardly artistic. The tragedy in the book should have a different sort of source.

The author's style is more finished and more brilliant than in "Jerome;" it is enriched with sparkling metaphor, flashes of wit, and such keen epigrams as "The barriers of tragedy are nothing to those of comedy." She has also mastered such suggestive, summing-up passages as the following:--

> "Ellen saw her father, and smiled and nodded, then she and her lover passed out of sight. Another rocket trailed its golden parabola along the sky and dropped with stars; there was an ineffably sweet strain from the orchestra; the illuminated oaks tossed silver and golden boughs in a gust of fragrant wind. Andrew quoted again from the old King of Wisdom--'I withheld not my heart from any joy, for my heart rejoiced in all my labor, and that was my portion of labor.' Then Andrew thought of the

---

[1] Octave Thanet: Bookbuyer. December, 1901.

hard winter which had passed, as all hard things must pass, of the toilsome lives of those beside him, of all the work which they had done with their poor, knotted hands, of the tracks which they had worn on the earth towards their graves, with their weary feet, and suddenly he seemed to grasp a new and further meaning for that verse of Ecclesiastes. He seemed to see that labor is not alone for itself, not for what it accomplishes in the tasks of the world, not for its equivalent of silver and gold, not even for the end of human happiness and love, but for the growth in the character of the laborer."

The impression left by "The Portion of Labor" is that its author has made progress in every detail of her art,--except novel technique.

Mrs. Freeman's next novel, "The Debtor," published in 1905, deals with life in a New Jersey suburban town. In the three years since her marriage and her coming to New Jersey the author had gained an intimate knowledge of the types of character presented although there is not just the same perfect familiarity and intimacy, the same impression of knowing the soul through and through, as when she portrays the Massachusetts village type. The theme is that of a man with no sense of financial responsibility whatever, and the dilemmas and troubles into which his risky method of keeping up appearances plunged his family. The two most notable points in this book are the development of its author's sense of humor and the new freedom from the oppressive and ominous sense of impending disaster characteristic of "Pembroke," "Jerome," and "The Portion of Labor." As usual, the character studies are by far the best part of the story. Her main characters are painted with perfection of detail. The "debtor" himself and his wife and sister are really attractive in their humorous irresponsibility. The character of Charlotte is made a thoroughly normal and most likeable one. Her small brother is admirable in his veracity of

delineation, his appealing small boy qualities, and the deeper suggestion of the influence of heredity on him. The pictures of the minor characters are clear and fine. One critic has aptly compared the way in which the barber shop group is painted in to a Flemish picture. Although the city workers are only sketched, the work is sharply and vividly done. They are real people as well as "studies in credulity, wrath, violence and despair." The style is hardly equal to that of "The Portion of Labor;" it lacks the vibrancy and snap. In parts of it, involved sentences and careless phrasing weaken the effect. The book possesses undoubted intensity, vividness, power, and while its author has not yet succeeded in building up a plot there is a more logical sequence of incident than before.

For a year after this Mrs. Freeman published nothing except several short stories. Then in 1907 came "By the Light of the Soul." In this work the author has obviously made a desperate attempt to compass the technique of building the plot of a novel, and has signally failed. The device to which she resorts for the purpose of unifying her plot and obtaining a series of ascending episodes leading to a climax has made the action so forced and artificial as to remind one of vaudeville farce. This device, the wedding of a boy and girl which remains a secret throughout their lives, is fantastically improbable; the incidents based on it are unconvincing, the coincidences are forced; the acts of the characters do not seem natural; the situation is not solved at the end of the book; the late introduction of the dwarf for the obvious purpose of getting Maria out of the complicated situation is absurdly grotesque; and Maria's act in

deliberately allowing her sister, while believing Maria dead, to marry the man to whom she herself had been secretly married is beyond comprehension or belief. The whole complication is incredible. Even the character development, usually the author's strongest point, is erratic and bewildering. Maria is contradictory and inexplicable; she is forced out of shape to fit the plot. Ida is inconceivably wooden and emotionless; Evelyn, on the other hand, is a slave to her emotions to an impossible degree. The minor characters are superficial, vague, and conventional. The first Mrs. Edgham promised well,and had she not died in the beginning of the story she would probably have been the one redeeming character of the book. The style is also inferior when compared with the author's other work; the awkward phrasings, displays of bad taste, and even lapses of rhetoric and grammar are all too common. The contradictions are without excuse; sometimes Aunt Maria is thin, sometimes fat; sometimes Evelyn's hair is light, sometimes dark. Even the chronology of Maria and Evelyn is hopelessly mixed. The stinging satire is clever, but too bitter in places. The book brought down upon itself violent criticism from various sources by its ill-advised, wholly unjust, and harmful picture of American co-educational school life. In brief, the book was hopelessly mediocre; it was neither historical, psychological, temperamental, nor even an ordinary unassuming novel. Had a tyro written it, it would probably have ended his career.

Neither of "The Shoulders of Atlas" (1908) nor of "The Butterfly House" (1912) is it necessary to say much. They have, in greater degree, all the weaknesses of their predecessors and

very few of their admirable qualities. It is sufficient to know that "The Butterfly House," the author's last experiment in novel writing, caused on the part of one critic the declaration that "Mrs. Freeman's talent has 'petered out.' " Though this is far from being true, the book is as great a failure, regarded as a novel, as is "By the Light of the Soul," and is even more commonplace. It is again a string of short stories; the theme is a threadbare one; the main incident is wildly absurd; the doings of the people are not even interesting. One character is impossible, the others are blurred and weakly drawn; nowhere is clear-cut, vivid delineation present. Only the introduction and fragmentary bits of description succeed to any degree in pleasing the reader, and they gain an added value through contrast.

V

HER SHORT STORIES

In the sphere of short story Mrs. Freeman possessed the same restless ambition to explore "fresh fields and pastures new" that she showed in novel writing. After the group of short stories,which marks the first phase of her career, came her first novel, and then a very long magazine story called "Silence." It was written in the same year as her one play, "Giles Cory, Yeoman," and shows the same evidences of delving into all the store of ghastly tradition connected with early colonial history. It deals with the rather overworked subject of an Indian massacre, and its theme is the development of insanity in the heroine as a result of the experience. While the author's mastery of short story technique does not fail her, she abandons her usual method of gaining desired effects by means of suggestion and paints in high lights all the revolting detail. Probably with the idea of obtaining vividness she makes such cumulative use of detail as the following.

"The village was roaring with flames; the sky and snow were red; leaping through the glare came the painted savages, the savage white face and waving sword of a French officer in their midst. Their awful warwhoops and the death cries of her friends and neighbors sounded in her ears. She saw close under her window the dark sweep of the tomahawk, the quick glance of the scalping knife, and the red, starting caps of blood. She saw infants dashed through the air, and the backward-straining forms of shrieking women dragged down the street, but she saw not David Walcott anywhere."

Such a passage is certainly vivid, and if used in moderation this vividness together with the contrast afforded by the rest of the story would make it admirably effective. But its over use,

the heaping of horrors on horrors in the choice of detail, make the story almost repulsive. Though undeniably it has power, the determined striving after vividness gives it the effect of melodrama.

In 1900 Mrs. Freeman again returned to the colonial period of United States history for short story material, but it was not with witches and massacres and insanity that she now dealt. One story tells of a bewitching little Puritan girl, her doll, her lover, and her austere yet adoring father. The second one tells of another Puritan maid, petted, full of girlish charm, eager over her first breath of romance, and of the quiet, unflinching sacrifice which was the elder sister's part in that romance. The last one describes three quaint old-maid ladies and their equally quaint and faithful old gallant. The stories are of an entirely different type from "Silence," and are more pleasing in subject matter even though they lack some of the other's rather lurid power. The title story of the collection, "The Love of Parson Lord," is especially interesting as one of those rare cases in which the mighty Puritan will yields to simple, human affection.

During the same year in which this collection was published came another evidence of Mrs. Freeman's "artistic restlessness." Not satisfied with exploring both her own surroundings and the by-paths of history, she attempted to widen her limited range of environment by entering the world of plants and animals. Her plan was to draw suggestive parallels between a person and that plant or animal which exemplified the same traits. The idea was ingenious, its working out was clever, and the stories are very

readable. Although some of the animal tales are remarkable for keen insight and for the bold suggestiveness of the parallel, one or two, like "The Monkey," rather repel by a certain unpleasing hardness of tone. The flower tales are far more full of charm, however. The dainty freshness of "Arethusa" and "Mountain Laurel" remind one of the wild flower itself in its cool woodland home, while as regards perfection of parallel, "Peony" is probably the best.

Mrs. Freeman's next expedition into the realm of the new and untried resulted in the publication of a group of short stories dealing with the supernatural. After separate publication in "Everybody's," these stories were gathered into a book entitled "The Wind in the Rosebush." Though these tales exploit nothing new or startling in the realm of fictionbased on the supernatural, yet one power strikingly developed in Mrs. Freeman serves her here in good stead by giving the stories a peculiar effectiveness. Mrs. Freeman has to an unusual extent the ability to narrate familiar, homely, convincing details in a straightforward, homely, unadorned way that produces an unescapable impression of reality. Poe, in his tales of the supernatural, uses with consummate skill word combinations that instead of depicting a clearly etched picture rather bring the mind completely under the dominance of horror, awe, apprehension, fear, or whatever emotion their connotation suggests. This wealth of connotation plays a minor part in Mrs. Freeman's group of stories. Her brief, plain sentences make you see the uncanny thing happening, and you can no more doubt it than you could doubt the evidence of your own senses. Poe's mysterious

events occur in dark dungeons, cellars, under the lurid light of a red moon, in the unearthly gray glimmer of an early dawn; those of which Mrs. Freeman tells take place in the prosaic, searching day-light. The very commonplace quality of the scene and setting adds a certain eerie shiver to the strangeness of seeing these inexplicable things happen in every-day surroundings. In American fiction this effective use of supernatural event placed in a familiar setting and set forth in simple, convincing narrative is peculiar to Mrs. Freeman; other writers of the supernatural have preferred to use as accessories scene and setting which would harmonize with the event itself, and phraseology which would by picture and suggestion add to the strangeness and horror. It would seem to be on this very count, the fact that Mrs. Freeman does not use this method, that one critic condemns so severely "The Wind in the Rose-bush etc."[1] But surely Poe's manner of creating as his single effect horror, dread, or fear is not the only one possible; every author admits the value of contrast, and the contrast obtained when the familiar is skillfully brought into conjunction with the supernatural is remarkably effective. Take for instance this passage from "The Shadows on the Wall".

"Henry Glynn stood and stared a moment longer. His face showed a gamut of emotions,- horror, conviction, then furious incredulity. Suddenly he began hastening hither and thither about the room. He moved the furniture with fierce jerks, turning to see the effect of it upon the shadow on the wall. Not a line of its terrible outlines wavered.

'It must be something in the room' he declared in a voice which seemed to snap like a lash. His face changed. . . . . For a few moments he raged about the room like a caged wild animal. He moved every piece of furniture; when the moving of a piece did not affect the shadow he flung it to the floor, the sisters watching. Then suddenly he desisted. He laughed and began straightening the furniture which he had flung down.

---

1 The Feminine Note in Fiction. William L. Courtney

'What an absurdity,' he said easily. 'Such a to-do about a shadow.'
'That's so,' assented Mrs. Brigham in a scared voice which she tried to make natural. As she spoke she lifted a chair near her.
'I think you have broken the chair that Edward was so fond of,' said Caroline. Terror and wrath were struggling for expression on her face. Her mouth was set, her eyes shrinking. Henry lifted the chair with a show of anxiety.
'Just as good as ever,' he said pleasantly. He laughed again, looking at his sisters.
'Did I scare you?' he said. . . . . 'You know my way of wanting to leap to the bottom of a mystery, and that shadow does look, --queer, like,-- and I thought if there was any way of accounting for.it I would like to without any delay.'
'You don't seem to have succeeded,' remarked Caroline dryly, with a slight glance at the wall. Henry's eyes followed hers and he quivered perceptibly.
'Oh, there is no accounting for shadows,' he said, and laughed again. 'A man is a fool to try to account for shadows.'
Then the supper bell rang, and they all left the room, but Henry kept his back to the wall."

These stories derive an added interest from the fact that the inexplicable phenomena they relate really come from that mysterious aura of the supernatural which ever hovered over the every day life of the Puritans and their descendants. "Louella Miller", for instance, half narrates and half suggests an incident based on the New En gland belief in "vampires". This very use of suggestion, this subtle leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions, is another mark of the author's skill. Though the stories are not striking or sensational they are well done; possibly a part of their convincing quality is due to the writer's own temperamental interest in these subjects.

In 1904 Mrs. Freeman published a volume of short stories entirely different in type. In "The Givers" the author has treated with keen penetration and admirable satire the subject of the inappropriate gift. "The Reign of the Doll", telling how the reconciliation of two proud and lonesome old sisters was brought about by a child's Christmas gift, is one of the best.

In 1910 came another collection, "The Winning Lady". Two of the stories, "Old Woman Magoun" and "The Selfishness of Amelia Lamkin", are especially worthy of notice. The former is a story of an old mountain woman who deliberately leads her much-loved grandchild to death in order to save her from ruin. It is charged with power and is intensely vivid and dramatic; the scene in which the grandmother watches the girl eat the deadly-nightshade berries in not easy to forget. "The Winning Lady" is also a good piece of work. The ironic humor is free from sting, and the author handles easily and lightly a theme which a few years before would probably have occasioned a story of depressing gloom. "The Joy of Youth" is something comparatively rare in Mrs. Freeman's works,- a story of pure, tender, and unshadowed sentiment. It is rather ideal; some might even call it fantastic and a bit sentimental, but the fact remains that it is a beautiful and idyllic study of a subject which too many writers turn into farce. "Billy and Susy" is the poorest one of the group. Here the author's power to appreciate the grimly funny phases of village life has led to a story of rather questionable taste, decidedly commonplace, and only clumsily humorous. "The Winning Lady" has so far been the last published collection of Mrs. Freeman's short stories.

The range of Mrs. Freeman's short stories, as of her novels, is sharply limited by her field of observation. In some cases she can take material she has read, interpret the characters in the light of types which she knows personally, and thus construct a story that has the true realistic note. This method is without question successful in such stories as "Silence", "Catherine Carr", and "The Love of Parson Lord", but nevertheless she cannot produce her best work in this way. Her imagination is the kind

that in order to work easily demands either first-hand observation or else memory pictures out of which to construct its finished products. Some authors have the type of imagination which can make Egyptian deserts, Italian moonlit nights, the subtle and menacing lure of India's forest, the world of Cleopatra, Alexander, Helen, Nero, Giaconda, Ceour de Leon the only world in which for the time being we exist, but Mrs. Freeman is bewildered and helpless when she leaves her native heath. In 1903 she made her first and last attempt to use foreign scene and setting, but somehow "A Happy Day" fails to impress the reader deeply; the background is reminiscent of Baedeker, and the people are New Englanders beneath a French exterior. It is rather odd, too, that even in stories very patently modern Mrs. Freeman seems ill at ease. When in "A Guest in Sodom"(1912)she used the theme of "motormania"and its effect on a simple-minded old man, the story had a certain uncomfortable incongruity. It was like driving a big 1916-model Cadillac through quaint, winding roads and up lanes drifted over with apple blossoms, to the shining door-step of Miss Louisa Ellis. After reading it you want to go back to the little New England villages as they were when people rode in old hooded buggies and open wagons.

But although this restriction of field is of course a limitation yet it is not wholly undesirable, for it results in an overmastering illusion of reality that could be produced in no other way than by a perfect, comprehensive knowledge of her scene and of her people, complete in every phase and every detail. This inexhaustible store of homely, convincing particulars and Mrs. Freeman's unerring skill in the use of it is one of the secrets of her power.

Regarding Mrs. Freeman's greatest source of power, her almost unique genius for psychological analysis and character development, much has already been said. This power also is largely confined to her own special field, the New England village. To a great extent Mrs. Freeman's ancestry explains her intuitive understanding of the enigmatical New England nature, though this of course does not mean as some fondly suppose that "she is just like the people she writes about". Her revelation of mental states or moral crises or development of character does not, except in a few of her novels, take the form of a deluge of detailed and bewildering exposition. A single word, a bit of dialogue, a suggestive phrase, a terse and significant comment, and the whole situation is vividly clear. "The Revolt of Mother" is perhaps as typical an illustration as any story of this method. Take for example this one paragraph. Could a more graphic picture of Sarah Penn's state of mind be given in a two page description of the scene?

"Friday the minister went to see her. It was in the forenoon and she was at the barn door shelling peas for dinner. She looked up and returned his salutation with dignity, then she went on with her work. She did not invite him in. The saintly expression of her face remained fixed, but there was an angry flush over it. The minister stood awkwardly before her and talked. She handled the peas as though they were bullets. At last she looked up, and her eyes showed the spirit her meek front had covered for a life-time."

Mrs. Freeman has a wonderfulcapability to comprehend the natural emotions which gives her stories a piercingly intimate quality; thisperfect grasp and forceful portrayal of the universal human emotions latent beneath the eccentric variations and peculiarities of the New England type which she presents gives her work both its wide appeal and its permanency. Some of her less known stories, those which have not been published in book form, illustrate well her peculiar power of character development. In "The

Slip of the Leash" (Harper's, 1904) the portrayal of the eternal struggle of the individual soul between the leash of its duties and the desire for its own development makes the story a very strong one. In "The Butterfly"(1903) a vital theme is treated, the atmosphere ofloneliness well created, and the character of the man strikingly and completely drawn. "The Secret"(1907) is an example of her extremely analytical stories. Mrs. Freeman's natural bent towards themes arising from problems of the will, moral questions and crises, together with her heredity, environment, and her faculty of keen observation and perception supply her with subject-matter of deep and universal interest.

Yet the criticism is sometimes made that this very absorption in the subjective phases of human life, the analyzing and depicting of mental states and moral issues, makes Mrs. Freeman's work so coldly technical as to strip it of human interest. It is true that some of the author's earlier stories, such as those in the 1897 collection, gave cause for wonder as to whether the perfection of the writer's analytical power would give her work a predominently scientific cast. But had this been the case her aim could never have been fulfilled; for to create a classic work which should not only be representative of our nation's best literature but should be international in its scope, and in that work to give a comprehensive, vivid, lasting picture of a quiet people almost unknown beyond their own protecting hills, demanded that the appeal be not only to the brain but to the heart. The true test of an author's real "oneness" with his characters is not whether he lavishes paragraphs of emotional matter on them, but whether his reader afterward feels for them the hearty interest and liking he feels for an old friend. In spite of the fact that Mrs. Freeman

sees her people with their human oddities and weaknesses and does not paint them with the light that never was on land or sea yet it is very evident that she does care for them as she would for living friends. She plainly delights in the "spunk" of Mother when she moves into her husband's new barn; she feels a hot impatience of scorn for the blindly selfish family who almost wear out Amelia Lamkin's gentle life; her laugh at the dilemma of the "Winning Lady" is a kindly one; her partizanship of big-hearted, perplexed old Jim and his dozens of cats is almost startling in its intensity of zeal; the mastery of the call that draws Christopher to the hill-tops is poignantly felt by her also.

Neither is her outlook, as some say, a dark and fatalistic one. This criticism probably springs from the sense of inevitability that permeates her pictures of the terrible, resistless force of the New England will. But though she sees clearly enough its distorted power and the suffering it entails, she nevertheless feels for the unfortunate possessor a sympathetic understanding; otherwise he would appear a monster to us. Some of her novels, it is true, are pervaded by a kind of oppressive gloom, an ominous sense of impending misfortune, but this is not so much stressed in the short stories. Here the proportions of tragedy and comedy are better kept; the higher meaning of homeliness is revealed to us under its plain exterior; the greatness and pettiness, the joys and sorrows of home-keeping American life are equally set forth.

In her later stories there is a note-worthy increase of the "milk of human kindness". In "Coronation", one of her best stories, one finds little of the dark and tragic note; on the other hand the sympathy with Jim and his cats and the keen appreciation of the humor of the situation make the story thoroughly enjoyable. "The

Amethyst Comb"gives opportunity for one of her most introspective and analytical tales combined with a rather depressing study of conscience, and yet her treatment of the theme is very different from what it would have been in the nineties. There is more tenderness, less cold analysis of emotion. The story is perfectly normal and the reader leaves it without the sense of having watched the dissection of a human soul. Mrs. Freeman has not lost that sense of perfect detachment from her stories which adds so much to their artistic finish; she does not let her own personality continually pervade her work as does Sarah Orne Jewett, but her youthful absorption in the workings of the will, soul, and mind has been tempered by a maturer breadth of sympathy which has revealed to her other phases of life.

Mrs. Freeman's style has been rather fully discussed in connection with her novels. In this regard she is truly a "self-made writer", for she had comparatively little schooling or formal training of any sort in composition. The result was that while her early style was wonderfully forceful and well suited to the subject matter it was very lacking in grace and music and harmony. It lacked, too, elegance and sometimes even correctness. Her sentences were short, simple in construction, with so little variation as often to seem monotonous, as in this paragraph from "Life-Everlastin'":

"After the preparations were all made she blew out her lamp, folded back the bed-spread, lay down in her clothes, and pulled it up smoothly. She folded her hands and lay there. There was not a bolt or a bar between her and the murderer next door. She closed her eyes and lay still. Every now and then she thought she heard him down-stairs, but the night wore on and he did not come. At day-light Luella arose. She was so numb and weak she could hardly stand. She put away the money and the jewelry, then she went down-stairs and kindled the kitchen fire and got breakfast. The silver was on the table just as she had left it, the door was half open, and the cold morning wind coming in."

Mrs. Freeman's manner of composition seems to have been rather temperamental. She worked when the inspiration came, and [1] she saysthat she wrote without copying and with little correction. This is to be deplored because it led to work that sometimes lacks taste, refinement, and even proper grammatical conformity. She speaks in her earlier stories of a "natty cottage", a "sacred edifice", "calm equanimity", a girl "coloring up", and a "smart piece of work". Her growth in command of language, however, is sure though gradual. From the short, direct sentences of her early stories she passed to the ornate, profusely decorated ones of "Madelon", the long and complicated ones of "Jerome", the pure beauty and cameo-clearness of "Evelina's Garden", the brilliant, trenchant, epigrammatical prose of "The Portion of Labor" and "The Debtor", to her final, settled style which is a composite of these qualities. Her terse directness she has never quite lost. She can pack a sentence as full of meaning, a word or phrase as full of connotative suggestion as any American writer. Take this from "The Doll Lady": "When she had seen a person once she had seen her forever; Minnie could never make any new impression upon the placid imperturbability of Mrs. Abbot's mind." Or take this bit of description from "A Kitchen Colonel": "She had withered complete, as some flowers do on their stalks, keeping all their original shapes, and fading into themselves, not scattering any of their graces abroad."

Her sense of color makes many of her descriptions idyllic in their charm. It is this combination of direct force and vividness which makes her style so exceedingly worth the thorough study of inexperienced writers.

---

[1] Mary Wilkins Freeman Bookbuyer, March 1891. pp. 53-54

Her humor hardly ever deserts her entirely, and it sometimes appears in seemingly incongruous places. It is elusive; it is inseparable from its context and so cannot be quoted as can Mark Twain's. Neither is it an ever-present mood which gives a humorous twist to each sentence and keeps a half smile always on the reader's face. It is rather a fleeting gleam which flashes out unexpectedly and lightens many a scene that otherwise would have too dark a tinge. Her wit is quick and piercing; it flies to the mark with the sudden, sure dart of a rapier thrust. In her last two novels, however, it becomes a bitter and stinging satire.

We now approach the question of why an author who not only is a leader among American short story writers but can stand comarison with those of Europe is so signal a failure as a novelist. The truth is that the former statement explains the latter. At the very outset of her career Mrs. Freeman mastered one form, made herself a short story specialist, achieved almost perfection in that one field, but at the cost of being barred from other fields. This immediate supremacy in short stort writing at once marked her as master of the form she had chosen and bound her to it. She seemed powerless, in spite of her courageous and persistent endeavors, to conquer the difficulties of novel technique. She cannotcompass plot construction; we remember her work not as a whole book but by separate and distinct incidents. When she uses novel form she also seems to lose that sense of detachment from her work that characterizes her short stories; very often, too, the provincialism which well suits the short story becomes in the novel so obvious as to be monotonous. Mrs. Freeman always

makes her central idea, her single impression, unmistakeable and dominant throughout a story; whether it be pride, jealousy, unselfishness, devotion to duty, it stands out in bold relief. But in her novels this single impression is so continually stressed that it fairly seems to become an obsession and grows oppressive. For these reasons her novels are far less attractive reading than her short stories; no power of character drawing or charm of diction can overbalance the inherent weakness of their construction.

On the other hand her short story technique is most admirable. Her theme and her single impression stand out clear cut; she keeps true the unities of incident, character, and emotion. There is no superfluity, no lack, no mistake of proportion; one has the satisfying sense of a perfect piece of workmanship. The reader feels their unswerving rapidity of action, their skilfully ascending series of incident, or intensification of emotion, their psychological and coherent climax.

We reach, then, our inevitable conclusion that Mrs. Freeman's enduring gift to American literature is her best work in the short story. Her novels, her play, her poems will gradually pass into that oblivion which is the inescapable end of all our deluge of fiction and drama and poetry, except the few preeminent works of true genius. But a group of her short stories will live in all probability as long as there is an American literature. In them she has fulfilled her aim; she has taken her simple New England country folk,and by the alembic of her genius she has made them immortal.

APPENDIX.

1

-Biography and General Criticism-

Books and Bookmen. Mary Wilkins Freeman.
Harper's weekly, Dec. 30, 1905.
(In the main just, though not comprehensive.)

Chamberlin, Joseph Edgar. Mary Wilkins Freeman at Randolph.
Critic, March 5, 1898.
(An account of the author's home,habits, and tastes.)

Chronicle and Comment. Mary Wilkins Freeman.
Bookman, June, 1896.
(Touches only a few points but shows insight.)

Mary Wilkins Freeman.
Critic, Jan. 2, 1892.

Mary wilkins Freeman.
Harper's Weekly, Nov. 21, 1903.
(General, but contains several points of interest.)

Mary Wilkins Freeman.
Bookbuyer, March, 1891.
(More valuable for its information about the author personally than for its discussion of her work.)

More, Paul Elmer. Hawthorne: looking before and after.
Independent, June 30, 1904.
(Very interesting and worth while as a well-written presentation of a new and suggestive point of view from which to study Mrs. Freeman's work.)

Moss, Mary. Mary Wilkins Freeman.
Bookman, Sept., 1906.
(A clear and appreciative discussion of some characteristics of the author's work.)

New England in the Short Story.
Atlantic Monthly, June 1891.
(A discussion of New England as a field for short story writers, and a comparison of Mrs. Freeman's work with that of Miss Slosson.)

Quint, Wilder D. Mary Wilkins Freeman in Randolph, Mass.
F. W. Halsey- - Women authors of our day in their homes. 1903 211:217.
(Another informal account telling of the author personally, her home, and her life in general.)

Thompson, Charles Miner. Mary Wilkins Freeman; an idealist in masquerade.
Atlantic Monthly, May, 1899.
(By far the best article on the subject. Keen, comprehensive, original, and in itself an excellent piece of work.)

Tutwiler, J. R. Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman.
Gunton's Magazine, Nov., 1903.
(A fair comparison of the two authors, bringing out the characteristic and contrasting points in the work of each)

The Feminine Note in Fiction. William Leonard Courtney.
Chapman and Hall London 1904.
(A 25-page discussion by an English critic, taking up Mrs. Freeman's short stories, Madelon, The Portion of Labor, and her tales of the supernatural.)

Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature.
Under Wilkins, Mary E.
(Too brief and too early in date to be of great value.)

II

-Separate Reviews-

Novels

The Butterfly House.
Nation, May 16, 1912.
Outlook, March 30, 1912.

By the Light of the Soul.
Nation, Jan.31, 1907.
Forum, April, 1907.
Howill, Herbert W. Present day tendencies in fiction.
(Severe, but fair and thorough.)
Bookman,March, 1907
March, Edward Clark.
Atlantic Monthly, July, 1907.
Smith, Harry James.

The Debtor.
Nation, Dec. 14, 1905.
Outlook, Nov. 25, 1905.
(Both of these are detailed, but slur over many faults in their favorable comment.)

The Heart's Highway.
Athenaeum, Oct. 20, 1900.
(In the main a very just criticism.)
Critic, Sept., 1900.
Pratt, Cornelia Atwood.
(Rather voluble in its unstinted praise.)

The Jamesons.
Bookbuyer, June, 1899.
Earle, Mary Tracy.
(Comprehensive though brief.)
Critic, Aug., 1899.

Jane Field.
William Dean Howells Heroines of Fiction.
1901 V.2 253-259.
(Analytical, detailed, and scholarly.)
Critic, March 4, 1893.
(Not detailed enough to be of great value.)
Nation, Feb. 23, 1893.
(Picks out the book's greatest flaw.)

Jerome
Bookman, Oct. 6, 1897.
(Fair on the whole, even though severe.)
Critic, Sept. 18, 1897.
(Too one-sided to give a correct idea of the book.)

Outlook, Aug. 21, 1897.
(Book's good points well brought out.)
Atlantic Monthly, Dec., 1897.
Thompson, C.M.
(The keenest and most thorough criticism.)

Madelon.

Saturday Review, July 4, 1896.
Preston, George, Concerning Good English
(Best discussion of the book; tells of an interesting and suggestive fact in the author's literary history.)
Bookman, June, 1896.
Atlantic Monthly, Aug., 1896.
Scudder, H.E.

Pembroke.

Edinburgh Review, April, 1898.
Reprinted in Living Age, July 16, 1898.
(A scholarly article of interest and value.)
Critic, July 21, 1894.
(Overlooks the book's defects.)
Nation, June 28, 1894
Atlantic Monthly, Aug., 1894.
Scudder, H.E. Marcella and Pembroke.
(A suggestive comparison of Pembroke with Mrs. Ward's Marcella.)

The Portion of Labor.

Critic, Feb., 1902.
Independent, Feb. 6, 1902.
(Keen, just, and thorough.)
Bookbuyer, Dec., 1901.
Thanet, Octave.
(Shows sympathetic insight and understanding of the book and its author.)

The Shoulders of Atlas.

Nation, July 9, 1908.

Short Stories

The Givers.
Athenaeum, July 2, 1904
(Too general to be of value.)
Critic, Nov., 1904.
Dial, July 16, 1904.
Books and Bookmen. MacArthur, James
Harper's Weekly, July 30, 1904.
(Best of the reviews of this collection.)

A Humble Romance.
Nation, July 21, 1887.

The Love of Parson Lord.
Bookbuyer, May, 1900.
(Criticism well-directed, though harsh.)
Bookman, June, 1900.

A New England Nun.
Bookbuyer, May, 1891
Atlantic Monthly, June, 1891.
Scudder, H.E.
(One of the best criticisms of the author's early stories.)

Silence.
Bookman, Sept., 1898.
(Though its praise of the title-story is too unconditional, it is on the whole a just estimate of the author's best work in short story writing.)
Critic, March, 1899.
(Of the same general trend as the other though more detailed.)

Understudies.
Bookbuyer, June, 1901.
Shipman, Carolyn.
Bookman, Nov., 1901.

The Winning Lady.
Nation, Jan. 13, 1910.
(Contains several good points but is extreme in its praise.)

III

-List of Works-

Books

1886	The Adventures of Ann.
1891	A New England Nun.
1892	Young Lucretia Jane Field The Pot of Gold
1893	Giles Corey, Yeoman.
1894	Pembroke.
1895	The Long Arm. Comfort Pease and her Gold Ring.
1896	Madelon.
1897	Jerome. A Humble Romance. Once Upon a Time.
1899	The Jamesons.
1900	The Heart's Highway. The Love of Parson Lord.
1901	The Portion of Labor. Understudies.
1903	The Wind in the Rose-bush. Six Trees.
1904	The Givers.
1905	The Debtor.
1906	By the Light of the Soul.
1908	The Shoulders of Atlas
1910	The Winning Lady.
1912	The Butterfly House.
1898	Silence.

Short Stories Published Separately

1884	A Gatherer of Simples	Harper' Magazine	Oct.
	A Humble Soul	Harper's	July
	A Humble Romance	Harper's	June
1885	A Souvenir	Harper's	March
1889	A Gentle Ghost	Harper's	August
	The Twelfth Guest	Harper's	Dec.
1890	A Poetess	Harper's	July
	The Revolt of Mother	Harper's	Sept.
1892	The Little Maid at the Door	Harper's	Feb.
	Pastels in Prose	Harper's	Dec.
1893	Silence	Harper's	July
1894	The Buckley Lady	Harper's	March
	A New England Prophet	Harper's	Sept.
1896	An Unlucky Christmas	Harper's Bazaar,	Dec. 12
	The Little Green Door	English Illustrated Magazine	
	Three Sisters and the Old Beau	Harper's	May
	Evelina's Garden	Harper's	June
	Neighborhood Types	Ladies' Home Journal	Jan.-May.
1897	One Good Time	Harper's	Jan.
	Serena Ann's Valentine	Harper's	
	The Quilting Bee in our Village-Ladies' Home Journal		Feb.
	Stockwell's Apple-Paring Bee	Ladies' Home Journal	Oct.
1899	The Love of Parson Lord	Harper's	Jan.
	The Tree of Knowledge	Harper's	Aug.
	Catherine Carr		
1900	Arethusa	Harper's Bazaar	Nov. 10
	Bouncing Bet	Harper's Bazaar	Sept. 8
	Prince's Feather	Harper's Bazaar	Oct. 6
	Pumpkin	Harper's Bazaar	Nov. 24
	Susan Jane's Valentine	Harper's Bazaar	Feb. 17
	Peony	Harper's Bazaar	Dec. 29
	The Cat	Harper's Magazine	May
	The Doctor's Horse	Harper's	Aug.
	The Lost Dog	Harper's	Oct.
	The Monkey	Harper's	Dec.
	The Parrot	Harper's	Sept.
	The Squirrel	Harper's	Nov.
	Mountain Laurel	Harper's Bazaar	Dec. 8

1901	The Prism	Century	July
	The White Birch Tree	Harper's Bazaar	Sept.
	Two for Peace	Lippincott's	July
	Morning Glory	Harper's Bazaar	Jan. 19
	Balsam Fir	Harper's Bazaar	Dec.
	A Tragedy from the Trivial	Cornhill	Jan.
1902	Lucy	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	Eglantina	Harper's Magazine	Aug.
	The Apple Tree	Harper's Bazaar	Nov.
	The Great Pine	Harper's Bazaar	Aug.
	The Lombardy Poplar	Harper's Bazaar	Sept.
	Luella Miller	Everybody's	Dec.
	The Vacant Lot	Everybody's	Sept.
	The Wind in the Rose-bush	Everybody's	Feb.
1903	The Revolt of Sophia Lane	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	The Butterfly	Harper's Magazine	Aug.
	The Chance of Araminta	Harper's Bazaar	Dec.
	The Elm Tree	Harper's Bazaar	Jan.
	A Happy Day	McClure	May
	Joy	Harper's Weekly	Dec. 12
	The Last Gift	Harper's Magazine	Feb.
	The Lost Ghost	Everybody's	May
	The Shadows on the Wall	Everybody's	March
	The South-west Chamber	Everybody's	April
1904	Gold	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	Hyacinthus	Harper's Magazine	Aug.
	She who adorns her sister adorns herself	Bazaar	May
	The Slip of the Leash	Harper's Magazine	Oct.
	The Reign of the Doll	Harper's Magazine	Jan.
	The Debtor	Harper's Bazaar	Dec.
	Humble Pie	Independent	Sept. 1
1905	Amarina's Roses	Harper's Magazine	Aug.
	For Love of Oneself	Harper's	Jan.
	Old Woman Magoun	Harper's	Oct.
	Pink Shawls	Harper's	Dec.
1906	Little Girl Afraid of a Dog	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	The Underling	Harper's	Jan.
1907	The Joy of Youth	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	The Fair Lavinia	Harper's	Jan.
	The Secret	Harper's	Aug.
	Willow-ware	Harper's	Nov.
	Billy and Susy	Harper's Bazaar	Nov.
1908	Her Christmas	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	The Selfishness of Amelia Lamkin	Harper's	Aug.
	The Travelling Sister	Harper's	Oct.

1909	The Cautious King	Harper's Weekly	Jan. 26
	Julia-Her Thanksgiving	Harper's Bazaar	Nov.
	The Winning Lady	Harper's Magazine	Nov.
	Josiah's First Christmas	Collier's	Dec. 11
	The Christmas Lady	Ladies' Home Journal	Dec.
1910	Dear Annie	Harper's Magazine	Oct.-Nov.
	The Umbrella Man	Harper's	Feb.
	The Slayer of Serpents	Collier's	March 19
	The Witch's Daughter	Harper's Weekly	Dec. 10
	Eglantina	Ladies' Home Journal	July
	The Fighting McLeans	Delineator	Feb.
1911	Cock o' the Walk	Harper's Magazine	Dec.
	The Horn of Plenty	Collier's	Nov. 18
	The Steeple	Hampton's	Oct.
1912	The Balking of Christopher	Harper's Magazine	Sept.
	The Doll Lady	Harper's	Jan.
	The Copy-Cat	Harper's	July
	Johnny-in-the-Woods	Harper's	April
	Little Lucy Rose	Harper's	Aug.
	A Guest in Sodom	Century	Jan.
	Something on her Mind	Harper's Bazaar	Dec.
	The Cat of High Degree	St. Nicholas	March
	New England, Mother of America	Country Life	July 1
1913	Big Sister Solly	Harper's Magazine	August
	Coronation	Harper's	December
	Noblesse	Harper's	January
	Blue Butterfly	Woman's Home Companion	Jan.
	Friend of My Heart	Good Housekeeping	December
	The Girl Who Wants to Write	Harper's Bazaar	June
1914	Amethyst Comb	Harper's Magazine	February
	Crisscross	Harper's	August
	Daniel and Little Dan'l	Harper's	April
	Outside of the House	Harper's	November
1915	Sour Sweetings	Harper's Magazine	January
1898	The Brotherhood of Three	London News	Dec. 18
	The Same	Harper's Weekly	Dec. 18
	Rosemary Marsh	Harper's Bazaar	Dec.11
	Wartime Dress	Cosmopolitan	Aug.

IV

-Outline Suggesting Course of Development-

Date	Novel	Short Story	Phases of Development
- 1884		Child poems and stories	Such tales as "A New England Nun".
1884-91		Typical N.E. short story	
1891-92	Jane Field	Same type as before	
1892-93	Play, Giles Corey	Silence	Overmastering interest in massacre,witchcraft,and lurid phases of colonial life.
1893-94	Pembroke		Return to later period, the "small N.E. village" era for material.
1894-96	Long Arm Madelon	Incongrous with novels of period "Evelina's Garden" for instance.	Period of "aberration",at least in melodrama of the novels.
1896-97	Jerome		Returns to old style and subject-matter;awakening of interest in social and economic problems.
1897-99	The Jamesons	Colonial short story	Attempt in the novel to master a radically different and widely popular style.
1899-00	Heart's Highway		Colonial novel; entirely new type-romantic novel- and far removed from The Jamesons.
1900-01	Portion of Labor	Symbolic plant and animal stories	Return to former subject matter and style;renewal of interest in economic and social questions.
1901-03		Stories of the super-natural.	
1903-09	The Debtor	Stories re-	Still character-studies

Date	Novel	Short Story	Phases of Development
	Shoulders of Atlas By the Light of the Soul	turn to old theme and old field of subject matter.	but lighter in humor, less unrelievedly intense, more warm human sympathy and real sentiment.
1909-10		Fairytale for children; weird witch story; several of same sort as in preceding period.	
1910-13	Butterfly House	Series of stories about children, a poor automobile story, and one of the best stories she had yet written.	Significant increase of interest in children; evidence of much time spent in knowing them familiarly and intimately. Stories treat them however more or less from the side of psychological interest.
1913-15		Several child stories. More of them treat of her old subject,- every-day life in a N.E. village.	A return to old scene and setting. A pronounced return to her old theme (the N.E. will) but treated in a broader and more humanly sympathetic manner, less in an obviously scientific and analytical fashion.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 086859680